

The Ostrich Feather Enjoys Greater Vogue Than Ever

The wise and daring investors who transplanted ostrich farming from Africa to the United States, are congratulating themselves now.

They are reaping a harvest this winter, such as perhaps they never dreamed of, for the plumes of the gawky bird are at the top wave of popularity that has lasted ever since the days when Gainsborough painted his world-famous beauties with huge hats covered with ostrich feathers.

Since that day, if not before it, in fact, the ostrich plume has lain very close to the feminine heart, but its vogue this year surpasses all records.

The fair votary of Dame Fashion may array herself in all that is beautiful and costly, her dress may be of pure silk, her fingers blase with diamonds, her coat be precious fur, but she is not happy unless the whole be surrounded by a picture hat, with two, three or perhaps four superb ostrich plumes.

It is almost impossible for milliners to meet the demand for high grade feathers, and if they were dependent solely on the stock imported from Africa, it would be quite out of the question, but the American ostrich farms at Pasadena, Jacksonville and Phoenix have flourished and the big bird has proved himself such a flourishing American, that a large part of the supply is now home product.

The ostrich feather is the basis of the hats of this year. Take off the plume, and what remained would be hopeless, but with the plumes almost any shape looks well.

But like every good thing the plume sends the price soaring. Fifty dollars is no uncommon cost for a hat trimmed with very modest feathers, and the particular consumer, who seeks for the example, a plume say twenty-four inches long, must not be surprised if called upon to pay \$80 for the feathers alone, without taking into account the cost of the other materials and the making.

The world's total supply of ostriches is now said to be about 380,000 birds. All but 20,000 of these are in Africa, the native country of the biggest birds.

The stock is not decreasing, for it is one of the good fortunes of the ostrich that to take his feathers does not cause his death. The feathers will drop off themselves if not removed, and there is nothing painful about the latter operation, though the vanity of the bird in being robbed of its chief ornament makes him resent the process.

The ostrich is too valuable a bird to be ill-used, for on an average they are worth \$800 per pair, and each one will produce some \$60 worth of feathers every year. Hence it will be seen that the owner has the strongest motives of self-interest to take care of the birds. The feathers are never plucked until they are ripe.

But the beauty of a feather and its cost depend more on its width, on the length and thickness of its fine or strands than on the length of its quill.

To some extent every feather is made, even to the handsomest being fortified with two additional feathers underneath, making three layers in all; and five or six layers are sometimes needed to give the tip the very thick, luxuriant effect so much admired.

A single ostrich feather is very scant and slim, indeed, and no woman would look twice at one. Preparing the feather is everything.

From first to last an ostrich feather passes through nearly one hundred different hands before being delivered to the retailers.

African merchants estimate that the industry brings into Africa every year some \$15,000,000, hence it is hardly to be wondered at that they oppose shipping of the birds to the farms of the United States. In fact, when the first experiment was made by an Englishman in California, he had to pay as high as \$1,200 a pair for his birds.

Along the Salt river valley in Arizona the development of the ostrich industry is steady and prosperous. The average compare favorably with those shipped from Africa.

Ostriches need a hot, dry climate, and alfalfa is the best food, though the

big fellow is not particular, and will eat most anything. Indeed, the humorists say that he enjoys nothing better than a hearty diet of stones.

It is only a little more than two decades ago since the first ostriches were brought into the United States with the serious purpose of attempting their culture here. Before that time the only ones seen in Uncle Sam's realm had been adjuncts to circuses.

When the experiment was first attempted there were many misgivings as to what success would attend the venture. It had been the accepted opinion that the birds would not thrive anywhere save in the Dark Continent.

This doubt has passed now, for not a single one of the farms is a loser, and some are yielding a considerable profit.

When full grown the ostrich is about eight feet tall, and weighs 200 pounds. Its enormous legs are possessed of great power, which make the bird a remarkably fast traveler.

The ostrich, when once in the mood, is a very strenuous layer. It generally averages fifteen to twenty eggs, sufficient for a setting, and in the course of a season will hatch out several broods. Where the barnyard fowl



FEEDING A TAME OSTRICH.

turns out its progeny in twenty-one days, just twice the time is required for the ostrich.

Plucking the plumes is done every eight months. At that period the plume is cut off, and later, when the stub dies, it is plucked out. This operation does not cause the bird any pain.

The plumes are then assorted with respects to size and beauty, those of the male being considered in point of size and quality as being very much finer. Its plumage is always black and white, while that of the female bird is drab.

The wing feathers frequently run to twenty-four inches in length. The tail feathers are also used, but they are not as long nor as valuable.

The plucking of an ostrich has to be done carefully, for a kick from one of the powerful legs of the bird is enough to disable a man, or even to endanger his life. The clipping generally takes place in small quarters, where the ostrich has no chance to use his deadly legs to advantage, and to further lessen the danger the head of the bird is covered with a sack, so that it cannot see the ravaging of its plumage.

Outside of the first cost of the birds, ostrich farming is not a costly venture. Their food bill is not a big one, and a farm of a couple of hundred acres is big enough to take care of as many birds as any farmer would want to

handle. The herds have to be kept in inclosures, for while many of them become tame, others never lose their wildness and tendency to pugnacity.

SPIDER BUILDING A WEB.

Delicate Operation Always Performed by the Female Insect.

Have you ever watched a spider making its web? It is an interesting sight. Only the female does the spinning and weaving.

First she makes a scaffolding of strong lines, which spreads from the center star-shaped, attended by guy ropes, fastened to various points. Then the fine, spiral threads, which catch the prey, are wound round and round and stick to the framework by little knobs of sticky fluid.

It is remarkable how she directs the thread. Holding it carefully by one hind claw to keep it well away from her body, she gives it a pull each time, then fixes it to one of the frame lines to make sure of its firmness.

The male spider is seldom seen in the daytime. The female lives on the web. She has eight legs fitted for walking on it. Each foot is furnished with three claws, the middle one being bent over at the end, forming a long finger with which she clings to the delicate web. The outer claws are curved and toothed like a comb. Opposite the claws are several stiff hairs which are toothed like claws.

Young spiders are hatched from eggs. They shed their skin as they

Rocky Mountain States Suffer From Pest of Bears

"Wanted—a bear hunter!"

This is the call that is going up from the Rocky Mountain States. From New Mexico to Montana have come reports of unprecedented depredations of bears this fall. Stockmen and ranchers have lost many thousands of dollars owing to the boldness of bears in breaking away from the corrals and making away with the choice of flocks and herds. Cattle and horses have been struck down and devoured on the open range, and Mr. Bruin has gone fat and well fed to his long sleep during the winter of 1906-7.

In some localities there are giant grizzlies whose death will bring down the blessings of the community on the head of the slayer. An instance is that part of the Rocky mountain range where Idaho, Montana and Wyoming meet. Here, on the edge of the yellow stone National Park, dwells a giant grizzly called "Old Boxer," who not only spreads death and destruction among flocks and herds every year, but who has a record as a man-killer. Three men have fallen before the fierce attack of this giant grizzly.

"Old Boxer" has chosen his retreat with a cunning that seems something more than mere animal instinct. After making a raid he retreats into Yellowstone Park. No game can be killed in the government's great game preserve, so "Old Boxer" is safe from pursuit. Then he returns to some ranch bordering on the park, and the despairing farmer finds bloody evidences of the great bear's visit. "Old Boxer" is one of the mightiest of grizzlies, and has been shot at times without number. He has been hunted with dogs, but bows the hounds over like nine-pins. The three human victims on his list have all been terribly mangled, showing how mighty are the muscles of the giant grizzly. Every bone in the bodies of the hunters was crushed either by terrific hugs, or by the blows from the great paws, any one of which would have broken the neck of a bull.

A little while ago a wealthy Englishman, Robert Tregarthen, whose favorite pastime is bear hunting, announced that next season he would return to the hunting ground where "Old Boxer" holds forth, and would devote months, if necessary, to running down and slaying this man-killer. The residents in that wild part of the country,

Mose" alone had caused \$5,000 worth of damage among stockmen and ranchers.

The increase of bears in the Western country is explained by the fact that bear hunting is not a sport to be taken up by anybody who is stout enough to "pack" a rifle. It requires considerable courage to face an on-come bear and plant a bullet in exactly the right spot. The average bear is inclined to go his way and let men go theirs, but if he is wounded he will never stop until the fight has gone to a finish. This is true especially of grizzlies. The grizzly bears of Colorado and New Mexico are of a smaller



A GRIZZLY BEAR AT CLOSE RANGE.

type than the genuine old "hump-back and shovel-nose" of Montana and Northern Wyoming. Only occasionally do they grow to tremendous size. But the Montana grizzly is the mightiest of his kind. One of these bears will run for rods with a bullet in his heart, and, even when mortally wounded will retain enough strength to kill his antagonist or chase him to a friendly tree.

This fall the best record at bear hunting, made by an outsider, was that of "Charley" Gates, son of John W. Gates. In a few days' hunting near Creede, Colo., Mr. Gates got five great bears. His guides unite in pronouncing

for bears and mountain lions, as in the case of coyotes and wolves.

INNKEEPER GETS A BIG TIP.

Custom Resulting From Law That Requires Hotel Rates to Be Moderate.

"If our hotelkeepers should ever be told of the Japanese method of tipping, why, we would all have to take to the woods," said a Far Eastern traveler. "In a Japanese hotel you give the proprietor the biggest tip of all when leaving, and grade the other tips accordingly."

"When your bill is handed to you it is customary to wrap up in a separate piece of paper an amount approximating about one-fifth of the whole amount and give that to the worthy innkeeper, together with the regular amount required of you by his account, which you inclose in the folded bill. Then you wrap up smaller sums in

smaller pieces of paper and parcel these Christmas packages out among the servants who have waited on you. "This tip to the boniface is called chodai, or ten money, and the Japanese explain its usage after this manner of reasoning:

"All hotel charges in Japan are forced by law to be very low, so that even the very poor man who finds himself on the road of nights can get food and shelter for a nominal sum. The rich man has to pay no more than the beggar."

"Since the hotel man could not make a living if this order of things were allowed to exist, without some saving grace, some recompense must be made to the hotelkeeper for his enforced generosity. Therefore, it is argued, if a guest can well afford to give the host something more than he asks he not only provides for those less fortunate than himself, but he feeds himself against the evil day when he may have to ask a beggar's board and bed. It is not charity to the innkeeper, but merely wise provision against possible hard times."

"But if a man whom the worthy host believes to be well able to afford a generous chodai leaves the hotel without paying the same, woe betide him should he ever return to that hostelry again. He will get last chance at the communal bath tub, will get the most draughty room in the house, and in a hundred ways be made to feel that he is the most miserable of men."

Malta a Swaying Island.

Does the island of Malta tilt periodically or slowly away like some gigantic rocking stone upon some gigantic pivot? For a long time certain phenomena of the tideless sea rising and falling in the harbors and other indications have given rise to the tilt theory. The seismograph ingeniously set up in the past at the dockyard and recently the beautiful new Milne seismograph established on the foundation rock of the university, confirm the presumption that Malta is swayed from side to side. The island may therefore yet become of interest to scientific men.

The Inertia of Jones.

"What do you suppose is the cause of Jones getting on in the world so slowly?"

"Pure laziness. That man would actually rather pay rent than move."—Judge.



A GOOD SHOT AT BRUIN.

used as they are to killing all kinds of big game, hesitate to follow the spur of "Old Boxer." The great grizzly has come unscathed through so many combats, and has wreaked such terrible vengeance on hunters whose first shot fails to find a mortal spot that the most hardened guide and hunter gives "Old Boxer" a wide berth.

John Goff, probably the greatest bear and mountain lion hunter in the country, who won fame by guiding President Roosevelt through the big game section of Colorado, has moved to Gardiner, Mont., the entrance to Yellowstone Park. Goff has a contract with the government to clear the park of mountain lions, which have been declared a nuisance owing to their killing of deer. It is possible that Goff will also be given a contract to rid the park of some of its troublesome bears, including "Old Boxer."

Bears have increased more rapidly than any other animals in the park, and they are growing to be a menace to tourists. If Goff is told to rid the park of its troublesome bears, "Old Boxer" may as well consider his death warrant signed. Goff has the greatest pack of bear dogs in the country and is a hunter who has emerged victorious from many a contest with man-killer bears. In the meantime, unless Tregarthen kills him, "Old Boxer" will continue to leave death and destruction in his wake.

Ranchers in Central Colorado have not yet ceased rejoicing over the killing of "Old Mose" a year or two ago. This grizzly was the largest ever killed in Colorado. He had lived a life of slaughter and carnage for many years. He would kill a steer with one blow of his paw and then drag the animal to some convenient place, where he would finish his meal. He carried many bullets in his body, but they never seemed to bother him in the least. Although he had no men on his list of victims, "Old Mose" had given many a hunter a great scare and had kept several treed all night. Finally he was laid low by a well directed shot that pierced his heart, and ranchers for miles around wanted to decorate the bear hunter with a medal of honor. It is estimated that "Old



FINE SPECIMENS OF FULL-GROWN OSTRICHES.

THE NOVEL OF THE WEST.

A Sample of the Eastern Style of Writing.

The desert lay purple under the fierce sun, which beat down upon it like an automatic carpet beater. A rattlesnake here and there rattled itself to sleep, while an occasional lizard lizzed quickly from rock to brick. The bloom of the lilac cactus attracted a few bees, and a hummingbird, more than usual of a hummer, pecked daintly at the fruit of the wild peach tree.

It was a typical day in the West, the great, glorious West, where men are men, women are women, weather is weather and strangers are few. Suddenly a figure dashes into view. It is a woman, mounted on a superb thoroughbred.

Irrigation Ike brushed a rattler from his neck and rose to his elbow. "The new schoolmarm," he muttered. "She wins four ways from the jack," he added approvingly.

Irrigation Ike stood up and doffed his hat. As he did so a bullet clipped his ear. "None o' that!" said a voice. "I seen her first, and I offers my heart and wages first."

Irrigation Ike stood up and doffed of Green River Bill. Green River Bill glared into the eyes of Irrigation Ike. The sun glared into the eyes of both.

The lady rode on. "Winner asks the girl to have him," said Irrigation Ike. "I'm agreeable," said Green River Bill.

Two shots rang out. Green River Bill fell.

"You can have my derby hat for a wedding present," he gasped with his last breath.

Irrigation Ike galloped after the girl. Soon he caught up with her.

"Will you marry me, Miss?" he asked humbly.

"Can't," answered the lady. "Husband won't let me."

"And I've slew my best pal," said Ike, sadly.

Yielded Gracefully.

"Minnie, didn't your father make a fuss when you showed him that diamond ring and told him Clarence gave it to you?"

"Not a bit. All he said was, 'Who? That insignificant little—but what's the use!'"



SCENE IN A BEAR HUNTERS' CAMP IN THE ROCKIES.